

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1, 14, and 27 are amended. Claims 28 and 29 are added. A clean version of the entire set of claims is as follows:

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1. (ONCE AMENDED) A method for identifying and storing changes to a data processing system within a distributed data processing system, the method comprising the computer-implemented steps of:

initializing the data processing system for a capture of an initial state of the data processing system;

modifying the data processing system;

capturing a modified state of the data processing system; and

storing differences between the initial state and the modified state as a set of configuration parameters in a depository, wherein the differences are separated into system-specific changes and user-specific changes; and

wherein the system specific changes are applied on a per-system basis and the user-specific changes are applied on a per-user basis.

2. The method of 1 wherein the distributed data processing system is a heterogeneous client-server system.

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3. The method of 1 wherein the data processing system is a Windows-based system.

4. The method of 1 wherein a state of the data processing system is captured by performing a snapshot of data within the data processing system.

5. The method of 4 wherein the snapshot may be configured to include or to exclude portions of data within the data processing system.

6. The method of 1 wherein the differences between the initial state and the modified state comprise differences between user files, system files, user registries, and system registries.

7. The method of 6 wherein the differences between user files and differences between user registries may be used to manage configurability of the application on a per-user basis.

8. The method of 6 wherein the differences between system files and differences between system registries may be used to manage configurability of the application on a per-system basis.

9. The method of 1 wherein the differences between the initial state and the modified state comprise differences between .INI files.

10. The method of 9 wherein the differences between .INI files is captured line-by-line.

11. The method of 1 wherein the data processing system is modified by installing an application.

12. The method of 1 wherein the data processing system is modified by changing a registry file.

13. The method of 1 wherein the data processing system is modified by changing a .INI file.

14. (ONCE AMENDED) An apparatus for identifying and storing changes to a data processing system within a distributed data processing system, the apparatus comprising:
initializing means for initializing the data processing system for a capture of an initial state of the data processing system;
modifying means for modifying the data processing system;
capturing means for capturing a modified state of the data processing system; and

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storing means for storing differences between the initial state and the modified state as a set of configuration parameters in a depository, wherein the differences are separated into system-specific changes and user-specific changes; and

wherein the system specific changes are applied on a per-system basis and the user-specific changes are applied on a per-user basis.

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15. The apparatus of 14 wherein the distributed data processing system is a heterogeneous client-server system.

16. The apparatus of 14 wherein the data processing system is a Windows-based system.

17. The apparatus of 14 wherein a state of the data processing system is captured by performing a snapshot of data within the data processing system.

18. The apparatus of 17 wherein the snapshot may be configured to include or to exclude portions of data within the data processing system.

19. The apparatus of 14 wherein the differences between the initial state and the modified state comprise differences between user files, system files, user registries, and system registries.

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20. The apparatus of 19 wherein the differences between user files and differences between user registries may be used to manage configurability of the application on a per-user basis.

21. The apparatus of 19 wherein the differences between system files and differences between system registries may be used to manage configurability of the application on a per-system basis.

22. The apparatus of 14 wherein the differences between the initial state and the modified state comprise differences between .INI files.

23. The apparatus of 22 wherein the differences between .INI files is captured line-by-line.

24. The apparatus of 14 wherein the data processing system is modified by installing an application.

25. The apparatus of 14 wherein the data processing system is modified by changing a registry file.

26. The apparatus of 14 wherein the data processing system is modified by changing a .INI file.

#3 27. (ONCE AMENDED) A computer program product on a computer-readable medium for identifying and storing changes to a data processing system within a distributed data processing system, the computer program product comprising:

- first instructions for initializing the data processing system for a capture of an initial state of the data processing system;
- second instructions for modifying the data processing system;
- third instructions for capturing a modified state of the data processing system; and
- fourth instructions for storing differences between the initial state and the modified state as a set of configuration parameters in a depository, wherein the differences are separated into system-specific changes and user-specific changes; and

wherein the system specific changes are applied on a per-system basis and the user-specific changes are applied on a per-user basis.

#4 28. (NEW) A method of managing a distributed data processing system, comprising the computer implemented steps of: